

Delores G. Kelley, Chair  
Brian J. Feldman, Vice Chair  
3 East Miller Senate Office Building  
Annapolis, MD 21401

SB 521  
Supporting

Dear Chair Kelley, Vice Chair Feldman, and Members of the Finance Committee,

Because of the pandemic, the professor hiring me as a Graduate Assistant brought my work down to half-time. This was not based on my performance. In fact, he wants to keep me in his employment as long as possible, but because of a lack of funding, I was demoted. Now, I'm expected to live off of \$400 every two weeks. This doesn't cover rent, let alone food, school expenses, or mental health assistance. Additionally, the removal of opportunities for employment for graduate students allows me no other option than to stay in a job in which I don't make enough money to cover basic needs.

My employer reached out to the university to see if they could help fund half of my GA salary so that I could stay on full time. Of course, they said no. The lack of care toward students is unheard of. We already are having to deal with classes that cost the same as before the pandemic with a decrease in educational value. Collective bargaining rights could help students like me keep the employment we deserve during such a trying time.

Thankfully, I've been fortunate. Others aren't even employed because the university has essentially removed any sources of funding available before the pandemic. If we can group together and get taken seriously as a group of necessary employees for the university, maybe we can change testimonies like mine.

Sincerely,

Joanna Avery  
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